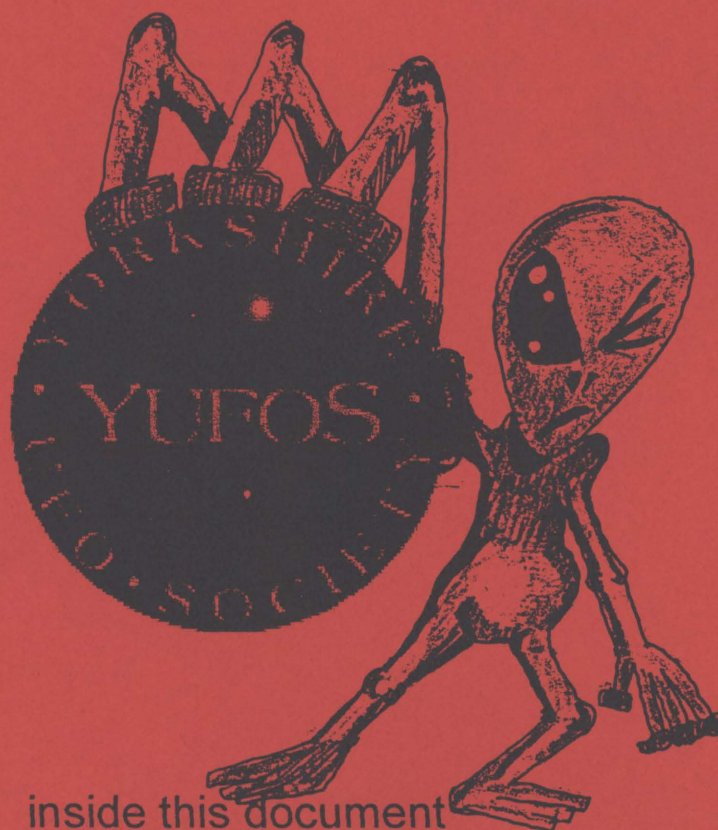


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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol 6 # 10)



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THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

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"We want.....a shrubbery!!!!"

A VIEW FROM BRITAIN

THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

(Originally published in The MUFON JOURNAL, May 2002)

(Editor's note - Please bear in mind the original date of publication. YUFOS extends its thanks to Jenny & to Dwight Connely, editor of The MUFON Journal, for permission to reproduce this work.)

UFOLOGY IN DISGUISE?

Britain is currently awash with debate concerning the manner with which the MoD (Ministry of Defence) investigated UFOs during the 1950s and 1960s. Our archaic secrecy laws have long ensured that information on this was barely ever conveyed to the public - even via the PRO (Public Record Office) in Kew, London, where official documents available to public scrutiny are to be housed.

Indeed the MoD had long argued that they had destroyed all relevant early information about UFOs - such as working party reports and investigations into major cases. Only a few scattered documents - such as letters from the public or reports about RAF pilot sightings during a flap that bedeviled a NATO exercise (Operation Mainbrace) have come to light. Many suspected otherwise and two men set out to prove it. They succeeded.

Breakthrough

The two long term UFO researchers, Andy Roberts and David Clarke, began a project to try to coerce the MoD into releasing their documents 18 months ago. They did this partly by setting themselves up - not as UFO buffs - but as 'social historians' and citing their record at explaining away many cases - no doubt as a means to persuade the powers that be that they could be trusted. David also has a doctorate in folklore and funding to aid the often lengthy quest for information and this has worked wonders in getting through to the people that matter.

Documents flowed out - including some once denied. And through what is unquestionably a highly skilful investigation, following many leads and clues, they traced others that nobody suspected to exist and found many ex MoD and RAF big wigs willing to tell their story directly to the two UFOlogists (even if they were not now calling themselves UFOlogists!)

Andy and Dave then set off to write a book on all of this - *Out of the Shadows* (Piatkus, London, May 2002).

It has created considerable media interest - with a BBC radio documentary aired in April based on their interviews with RAF personnel and with a Discovery Channel TV documentary in the can set for transmission as well as serialisation of their book in Britain's biggest selling daily newspaper - the *Daily Mail*.

Yet in pre publicity I have seen them put forward as if they are outsiders investigating our field and not as rational insiders who have something pertinent to say. This is no doubt a valuable PR ploy so as to ensure that those who normally consider UFO enthusiasts to be crackpots will at least hear what these chaps have to say. But it is proving a little galling for some UK UFOlogists.

In my view it is perfectly legitimate to term the research that these two UFOlogists have carried out 'social history' - since it tells the story of how society in Britain during the Cold War era dealt with the problem of UFOs. It is not really cheating to present evidence in that restrained manner. One might properly call it good marketing.

Indeed I must admit that I have toyed with the concept of reinventing UFOlogy in disguise to get away from the bad image that it often has. When Andy, Dave, myself and several other British UFOlogists launched a net based UFO forum three years ago we considered junking the name 'UFO' altogether for this.

Rather tongue in cheek I suggested that we tell the public that we were investigating 'scientific anomalies' and were called 'Scientific Anomaly Network Enquiries' - or SANE. Someone then pointed out that they did not fancy telling a journalist, who asked what group they belonged to -

"Actually, I am in Sane" - although I rather liked the PR possibilities that this might bring!

Still, in the end, we reverted to the sedate title UFOIN (UFO Investigators Network) - although I suspect it is only a matter of time before some researchers wise up to the advantages of not coming across as UFOlogists because not doing so offers a means to reach a broader audience. So I cannot blame Andy and Dave if they have sensed that opportunity whilst promoting their book.

Credit

Possibly the success they have had with this approach is one reason why some resentment seems to be simmering in British UFOlogy. A few other UFOlogists have adopted the same documents (although not, as far as I can see, Andy and Dave's superb list of interviewees that do by far the most to transform these papers into real social history).

This information has appeared at conferences and in the UFO literature, during recent weeks, not always, Roberts and Clarke believe, with proper credit given to their efforts. And, I suspect, they are correct. Something of an acrimonious battle has grown up - fighting over who should get the respect due for doing this research. But if there is an award for services to UFOlogy over the past year then Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke surely deserve to win it hands down on the basis of all that they have added to our knowledge.

I must admit - though - to a bit of a wry smile when reading their chapter on the Lakenheath/Bentwaters (1956) case. There is no question that they present a cogent and extremely detailed account that is packed with new information that they have personally secured. Nor that they have tracked down and interviewed many of the key players in this story, making their record of it easily the most comprehensive and important to ever appear in print.

However, it is not always made very clear how this case was investigated by other members of the UFO community before them. There are one or two credits I feel are lacking here that do not make the final edit. (Although I understand these were in the original draft)

Let me emphasise that I do not say this to demean their contribution in any way. Very far from it. They have pursued this case

exceptionally well and rightly quote from their own direct interviews as primary sources.

The sad thing is that any ongoing argument about credit will distract attention away from the importance of the information that is being published by them - not to mention the huge questions that it poses about official government handling of UFOs. It is an interesting side debate. But there are far more important issues to arise from this research.

When is a skeptic not a skeptic?

One of the big arguments raised against these two researchers (be they UFOlogists or social historians!) is that they have a debunking style that seeks to reduce cases to misperceptions or hoaxes. They certainly do look for answers - something I can vouch for having known them both for many years. And they do not pull any punches in doing so - exposing deception or sloppiness whenever they see it in a manner that you either find refreshing or you detest. In fact your perception may depend whether you have ever been on the end of their wrath (nearly always with good reason I should add).

However, what I think is often misunderstood about Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke is that they are skeptics in a pure sense rather than debunkers. Whilst neither seem convinced that UFOs in any traditional form do exist - if indeed anything beyond misperceptions is involved at all - they are not embittered champions of an effort to destroy UFOlogy. They say - and I believe them - that they would publish (and be delighted to publish) the facts of any case truly seen to be unexplained after investigation. And they have indeed admitted from time to time that cases do still mystify them. This is not the hallmark of a debunker.

Out of the shadows

Out of the Shadows is sure to be the talk of UFOlogy over summer 2002 (at least in the UK). And rightly so. This is not the place for a book review, but having read a proof copy of the MS I can add some thoughts that may surprise.

This is indeed a fascinating account of how and why the British government got interested in UFOs and the mess they often made of the job. But it reveals not a few new cases exposed by the documents and interviews with prominent figures that these authors have directly uncovered.

And some of those cases are ones that the authors freely admit that they cannot explain. I doubt most of their critics were expecting that.

This includes what may be the earliest unexplained incident in the UK records, dating from 28 November 1942. It involves the entire crew of an aircraft from Syerston in Lincolnshire that was flying over the Alps. Twice during a period of 45 minutes they saw an object tailing their plane that was long, tubular and had rows of red lights on the side. What is more the captain said he had seen a similar object three months earlier. And this one was on the ground as his aircraft passed over Holland near Amsterdam.

To the no doubt surprise of many (but not of myself) the authors point out that none of the obvious explanations for such an incident (such as a fireball meteor) fit this case. And it is not the only occasion that they demonstrate proper objectivity. This book is packed with good sense analysis of what is often previously untold information.

When not to be a UFO enthusiast

But to me perhaps the over-riding thing that emerges from this unquestionably important work is the consequence of it being presented almost as if it is written by outsiders who are analysing the foibles of UFOlogy. I have no doubt that this will suit the needs of Andy, Dave and their book. It will gain them recognition for the important data that they are publishing that two men presented overtly as UFOlogists would never get. And they will reach an audience that can embrace them as objective outsiders, when they would probably regard UFOlogists as anything but objective.

However, this raises interesting questions for our future as a subject. Should we all, as a community, be willing to masquerade as something other than UFOlogists in order to play the political games unfortunately necessary in this modern world?

Whilst I am not ashamed to call myself a UFOlogist I do know (and have often seen in action) how someone who calls himself 'Doctor' (even when that credential is in some instances rather dubious) gets a credible hearing from the public merely because that appellation creates an impression of sobriety and greater knowledge.

Would a scientist who is also a UFOlogist be advised to present themselves in public as a scientist who tries to keep an eye on those pesky UFO buffs rather than as a UFOlogist who attempts to use science during investigations? And would many of us stand a better chance of being listened to if we presented ourselves as cautious, objective, even sceptical outsiders aware of and even critical of the mistakes of those rather silly UFOlogists? It is an issue we may all have to face.

Unfortunately, in an age where presentation counts I suspect Roberts and Clarke knew what they were doing here and were not ill advised to minimise their status as UFOlogists and maximise their role as social historians. If it works, as I bet it will, then maybe more of us will have to pay attention to their methods.

Of course, this has to be coupled with an ability to do first class research that uncovers masses of new information and to present your findings in a totally objective manner. There can be no question that *Out of the Shadows* achieves all of that and more in a way few UFO books have ever achieved. It is - I suspect - one of the most fact packed titles, rich in brand new information in the genre and you should treat it on that basis - not through any preconceived notions about who the authors are or how they choose to present themselves.

Like it or not Andy and Dave are 'one of us'. They are UFOlogists and, I am pleased to say, darned good ones at that.

TOO MUCH MONKEY BUSINESS

(PART 2)

BY JONATHAN DOWNES (CFZ)

"Don't worry Ladies and Gentlemen – these chains are made of chrome steel"
The Showman in *King Kong* (1933)

Once again, YUFOS are indebted to our great friend Jon Downes for the following article, which will be appearing in one of Jon's future books. Enjoy...

As noted earlier, there is a certain amount of zoological logic behind the argument that unknown species of hominoid could exist in many of the parts of the world from where such things have been reported. There is only one species of primate known from Europe – the Barbary Ape, (*Macaca sylvanus*), which is only known from the Rock of Gibraltar. This species is almost certainly not native to the continent, and apart from mankind there have been no other primates living in Europe for millennia. BHM phenomena, however, have been reported with depressing regularity, and in these cases there are no zoological explanations lurking in the wings to provide a convenient alibi.

One of the most well known of recent British BHM sightings is that reported by David Colman, a Scottish UFO investigator. He was driving with his family one day in 1996 when he saw a running figure silhouetted like the image on a film negative running along side his car. It seemed to move effortlessly and Colman is convinced that there is a strong connection between his sighting and the UFO activity which was so prevalent over that part of Scotland at the time.

The 'running man' is a fairly familiar figure in Scottish folklore. It is, I believe, significant that these sightings are still being made today. Another well attested, and very similar phenomenon, is 'Jack the Runner', a phantom seen regularly in the drive of Glamis Castle, the site of yet another, well known semi-legendary quasi-humanoid monster.

Glamis Castle in Angus, which apart from being the ancestral home of the Queen Mother is also the site for one of Scotland's best known mystery humanoids; the monster of Glamis Castle. He is supposed to have been the hideously deformed heir to the Bowes-Lyon family who was, according to popular rumour, born in about 1800, and died as recently as 1921. He is supposed to look like 'an enormous flabby egg', having no neck and

only minute arms and legs. His physical shortcomings are made up for by his immense physical strength, and according to some accounts his propensity for evil. There is a family 'secret' concerning the monster, which is only told to the male heir of the Bowes-Lyon family when they attain majority. According to Peter Underwood, however: *"The present Lord Strathmore knows nothing about the monster, presumably because the creature was dead when he reached his majority, but he always felt that there was a corpse or coffin bricked up behind the walls"*.

Other accounts of the appearance of this singular monster give it a far more distinctly simian appearance. Elliot O'Donald, writing in a book on Scottish Ghosts earlier this century described several witnesses accounts of a creature with a large pumpkin-like head, a wide mouth with large teeth, and very long arms with gnarled fingers. The witnesses he cited also described the beast as being semi-transparent suggesting that it may have more to do with the semi-mythical zooform BHM apparitions described in the rest of this chapter than would otherwise have been supposed.

Perhaps the best-known apparition of a Scottish 'man-beast' is 'The Big Grey Man of Ben McDhui'. This yeti-like creature has been reported on many occasions over the past hundred years or so. A similar entity has been reported from Dundonald Hill in Ayrshire. I have already given my reasons for rejecting any suggestion that these reports are of a hitherto unrecognised species of Scottish primate. Indeed, even supposing that such a species were zoologically and ecologically feasible, the more detailed reports, like that of David Coleman, suggest that something less tangible than an unknown animal is at work.

These are far from being the only reports of a Scottish man-beast, however.

One particularly intriguing series of records comes from the area around Torphins, near

Aberdeen and took place in 1993 or 1994. Three young men, who have asked to remain anonymous were walking along a wide track through a forestry plantation when they encountered, what, if this sighting had occurred in the USA, we would have no compunction in identifying as a 'bigfoot'. One of the youths saw a dark human-shaped figure run across the track, from the left hand side to the right, two hundred yards in front of them. He felt an immediate sense of terror and foreboding, but his friends saw nothing. They were teasing him and accusing him of having made up the whole incident, when all three saw a face, that they afterwards described as *being "human... but not human"*, peering out at them from between the branches of the fir trees. One of them threw a stone in the general direction of this apparition, and the creature disappeared.

As two of this country's few working cryptozoologists we are quite prepared to accept the possibility that various species of undiscovered primate, whether monkey, anthropoid-ape, or even hominid, await discovery in various far flung parts of the world. We are also happy to consider each of the quasi-scientific hypotheses given earlier in this book as explanations for the yeti, yowie and bigfoot phenomena, in a favourable light. To ask us to believe that a hitherto undiscovered species of primate is lurking anywhere in Europe, let alone in the wilds of Scotland is asking us to suspend belief to an unacceptable degree. We must look for alternative rationalisations of these phenomena.

The three young men described above had a second encounter with the same (or a very similar) creature, a few weeks later. They were driving into the town of Torphins, about two miles away from the site of their first experience, when a large, dark and hairy figure appeared at the side of the road. It began to run up the road behind them and was soon running level with the car. What was particularly surprising was that although the figure was running at a speed which sometimes approached forty five miles an hour, it did not seem to be fatigued. At one point the 'creature' stared into the car at the three youths, with an inquisitive expression, but after about five minutes it stopped, abruptly in the middle of the road, leaving the three friends to carry on, feeling somewhat flustered, with their journey. One of the three who have asked to remain anonymous, claimed later that a female friend of his, living

in a secluded cottage has twice seen a dark, hairy figure standing in the forest watching her cottage, before slinking away into the undergrowth.

There seems little doubt that as David Colman has suggested, these accounts are closely related to the UFO activity so prevalent in the vicinity at the time. A similar series of events which took place in the late summer of 1996 are also linked with UFO activity. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time they have been presented to an international forum.

I started off researching the cryptozoology and fortean zoology of the South Western peninsula of England, and much to my surprise, even in this well explored portion of the world there are reports of phenomena which can only be classed within the BHM group of Alien Animals.

Earlier we mentioned the bizarre fact that in most cases where one has an area frequented by a certain zooform phenomenon, the area is also frequented (or may be frequented) by an analogous form of 'flesh and blood' cryptid, and even when you consider the reports of BHM phenomena in the South West of England, there is no exception.

Although there have not been any documented non human primates living in the region since the earliest days of pre-history, the South West of England has always had a long and dishonourable tradition of feral people. From the Cannibals of Clovelly to the 'Brew Crew' of Treworrey, the region has attracted people who wish to live outside recognised society and these people have often degenerated into a wild and lawless existence, sometimes even reverting to a surprisingly primitive lifestyle. As well as these people who though undoubtedly wild men were not wildmen, there are a number of reports of entities whose nature seems far more analogous to some of the stranger BHM reports from around the world.

The Devon folklorist Theo Brown collected a number of such stories including one chilling recollection by a friend of hers who had been walking alone at dusk near the Neolithic earthworks at the top of Lustleigh Cleave on the extreme eastern side of Dartmoor.

Lustleigh Cleave is an extraordinarily strange place, and it appears to be one of those 'window areas' where an inordinate number of unexplained incidents and anomalous

phenomena seem to take place on an almost monotonous basis. I have got reports of sightings of a ghostly Tudor hunting party, mysterious lights in the sky, and even the apparitions of a pair of Roman Centurions, but Theo Brown's friend saw, clearly, a family of 'cave men', either naked and covered in hair or wrapped in the shaggy pelts of some wild animal, shambling around the stone circle at the top of the cleave.

In south Devon, between the towns of Paignton and Brixham lie Churston Woods. These woods have long been of interest to me because of the sightings of mysterious small carnivores which appear to be a relict population of Beech Martens (a species thought extinct in Britain since the last Ice Age). Fifteen separate witnesses over a six week period in August/September 1996 reported seeing what they described as 'a green faced monkey' running through the woods. Although some of the descriptions were very vague most of them described a tailless animal between four and five feet tall with a flat, olive-green face. Although there are primates with 'green' faces, (for example the olive baboon and some of the west African vervet monkeys), none of these correspond in the slightest to the descriptions of a humanoid or chimp like creature which was seen both swinging through the trees and running through the woods.

The link here is not just with the UFO reports which were so prevalent at the time but with another phenomenon which has attracted the public interest over the last few years - crop circles. There were several complex crop formations in the immediate area and a local researcher called Ed Bicknell found the corpses of three magpies arranged neatly in the middle of the formation. This wasn't the first time that dead birds had been found in Westcountry crop formations.

Veteran Crop Circle researcher Peter Glastonbury wrote for the CFZ archives:

"In 1995 I found dead pigeons within three separate crop circle formations in Devon. The formations arrived within weeks of each other:

At Matford Barton, near Exeter, farmer Peter Ash called me to report a ringed circle in one of his fields. He stopped anyone from entering the field until I arrived with colleague Graham Johnson. Inside the circle, near the southern edge, I found the first bird.

Examination on site showed that the bird's neck had been badly wrung. The actual head was nowhere to be seen. Several feathers were noted to be strewn around within the lay of the crop. We thought that maybe a fox had lain in wait at the edge of the circle waiting for an unsuspecting victim to fly down to feed on the fallen crop. However, if a fox did do this to the bird, why did it only take the head and not the body?"

He went on to describe how, several weeks later he found the remains of another pigeon in the main circle of a complex pictogram formation by the Torquay Two ring road.

"This time there was no body, only fragments. This bird had been completely shattered. Some of the pieces were intermixed with or under the flow of the crop, nearly halfway around the circle of barley. On the way out of the field I found yet another dead pigeon. This one was perfectly intact and I could not see how it had died".

A few days later near Dartington in South Devon he found another crop formation and in hit was yet another mutilated bird.

. "On the edge of this field I found the last pigeon. Like the first Torquay bird this was also completely shattered, with pieces spread throughout the standing crop. There was no sign of animal tracks anywhere".

Mutilated animals have been found in conjunction with crop formations in the United States since December 1974, when a pilot flying over a pasture in Meeker County, Minnesota, when he saw a dead heifer. It was lying inside a perfect circle of bare ground on a snow-covered field. The eyes, left ear, tongue, and part of the lip had been removed with what appeared to be surgical precision. There were neither footprints nor animal tracks anywhere around the body and the cuts were completely bloodless. From the air, the pilot was surprised to see dozens of circles in odd, random patterns spread over several acres of land. This case, researched by Linda Moulton-Howe is seen by many as one of the classic incidences of UFO related animal mutilation.

According to Peter Glastonbury, however, there was also a precedent for these happenings within the United Kingdom:

"In 1990 an amazing crop formation appeared at Barbury Castle, an Iron-Age hillfort just

north of Avebury, England. Nearby, a castrated horse was found entangled within a barbed wire fence".

He also described a peculiar incidence from Canada when, in 1992 a crop formation containing a dead porcupine was found. . .

"The poor animal was a mere one inch (2.5 cm) thick and had been dragged around the circle, apparently by the circle-making force. Porcupines will curl up into a ball when danger threatens, instead of running away to safety".

Lest anyone accuse me of having become diverted from the main subject of zooform man-beasts, however, we would just remind the reader of the plethora of 'bigfoot' sightings in Canada and Minnesota, and also of the reports of a 'ghostly bear' seen shambling around the Barbury Castle area of Wiltshire. but more of him and his kind in a moment. There seem to be a number of links between crop formations, UFO reports, animal mutilations and the occasional BHM phenomenon as well as to other Zooform apparitions which, on the surface at least, seem to have a radically different appearance.

For the record, our files also include reports of other 'man-monkeys' seen at the time and also a 'BHM-type apparition' seen in conjunction with a UFO in western Dartmoor in the early 1980's.

Another report, also from the South West concerns a man who later in Africa had a reputation as a big game hunter who saw a creature at the Hangleley Cleeve barrows in Somerset which he described long after the sighting as the most terrifying thing he had ever seen. He described it as a "*crouching form like a rock with matted hair all over it and pale, flat eyes*". We have other reports from that area of hulking man shaped shadows that are seen in a local quarry, and indeed the annals of forteana are full of such events world wide.

Whereas there is certainly a case for the zoological identity of some of the more well known BHM sightings across the world, we would not suggest for one moment that these people are part of a relict population of *Homo erectus* who are waiting on the genetic sidelines before emerging into the real world to make their existence obvious, and would maintain that such apparitions fall firmly into the category of BHM sightings worldwide.

Other British, and specifically South Western British sightings of anomalous phenomena which although they are presently classed elsewhere amongst the pantheon of fortean phenomena, are the Ape and Monkey Ghosts such as 'The Man Monkey of Lincolnshire', and more appositely the ghost ape of Marwood in Devon and 'Martyn's Ape' of Athelhampton in Dorset, which although they are explicable within the terms of purely regional folklore as 'animal ghosts', exhibit in my opinion, characteristics analogous to those exhibited by the smaller BHM phenomena of parts of the United States.

Unlike the phenomena in America, however these British phenomena each have a convenient little folk story to explain their presence in the occult infrastructure of the region. The Ghost Ape of Marwood was, when alive a pet of a local landowner who one day grabbed the landowner's young son and climbed a tree with him, refusing to come down, whereas the well known spectre of 'Martyn's Ape' is supposed to have its origins in the unfortunate pet of an earlier female scion of the Martyn family who was either accidentally walled up alive during building work, or entombed (also alive) when the daughter either committed suicide in a locked, secret room or was walled up by an unforgiving parent, (depending on which account you read). It is my supposition that rather than the apparitions being a result of these, rather far fetched stories, the stories were rather invented by local people to explain the sightings of monkey shaped apparitions, or small BHM as we should really refer to them, that had been seen in the vicinity since times immemorial.

Two final categories of the phenomenological pantheon, in the UK at least that I feel should really be categorised within the realm of BHM Zooform Phenomena, are ghost bears and some at least of the bipedal big cats that occur now and then amongst the plethora of mystery cat reports.

(Concluded next issue)

THE BIG GREY MAN OF BEN MACDHUI & OTHER MOUNTAIN PANICS (part 4)

ANDY ROBERTS

*'Though your nerves be of steel, and your mind says it cannot be,
you will be acquainted with that fear without a name, that
intense dread of the unknown that has pursued mankind from
the very dawn of time.'*

Richard Frere[1]

Ghost hunter and author Thurston Hopkins received a letter recounting an undated experience not dissimilar to many of the BGM and other panics discussed so far. The writer told of an experience which took place whilst visiting the hills above Rhossilly Bay in South Wales. As he climbed higher he became aware of feeling uneasy, a sensation which increased until he '...sat still and waited-then looked from side to side. I was being WATCHED. Slowly, painfully, in an agony of horror I turned my head to see I knew not what....' He continued his climb, all the time aware of the sensation of being observed. 'Then horror, violent sickening seized me. A huge menacing form enveloped rather than touched me. I prayed and shrieked aloud, and began to run - run madly down the steep to the sea.' The following day he made enquiries locally to be told 'Many a one has been frightened badly up there. It's got an evil name. Some say the old Stone Men used to live up there...' [65]

Another account dating from 1965 and also from south Wales recounts how a local man was walking on the slopes of Foel Feddau, when: 'Suddenly, as though a curtain had fallen, all about him changed completely and he felt the raw edge of fear. He felt that he was in the presence of the unknown.....He became aware that evil, invisible eyes were upon him.'and he '...rushed away from that accursed spot'[66]

During research for a book dealing with landscape mysteries one informant told of a mountain experience from the early 1960s which tops even that of the 'best' account from Ben Macdhui. The informant was a boy at the time, out on the 2000 foot Bleaklow plateau in the Derbyshire Peak District, with a friend to investigate one of the many WWII aircraft wrecks which litter the area. After visiting the crash site he heard his friend shout and....

'I looked and saw, all in one instant, grouse exploding out of the heather towards us, sheep and hares stampeding towards us and behind them, rolling at a rapid rate towards is from the direction of Hern Clough, a low bank of cloud or fog.....but what was truly terrifying was that in the leading edge of the cloud bank - in it and striding purposefully towards us, was a huge shadow-figure, a man-like silhouette, but far bigger than a man - as high as the cloudbank, as high as a house. And the terror that hit me and was driving the birds and the animals and my friend was utterly overwhelming - like a physical blow - and I have never felt the like since!' Needless to say both lads fled '....in mindless terror...and all the sheep and wildlife that could run or fly went careering down with us in utter panic.'[67]

A giant figure looming from mist? Uncontrollable panic? Why, it's the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui on holiday! The two boys had never heard of the Big Grey Man and his friend attributed this terrifying incident to 'Th'owd Lad', a Pennine appellation for the devil. Had this incident happened within a twenty mile radius of Ben Macdhui it would be the jewel in the legend's crown.

But what was it? It would be hard to explain this incident in purely psychological terms as it has two witnesses and, most significantly, reports of wildlife also responding in panic to the stimulus. Unfortunately the other witness has not been traced so I have been unable to follow that line of enquiry. Even if we ignore reports of strange clouds, fleeing wildlife and giant figures we are still left with an experience of extreme panic leading the witnesses to flee in terror.

The informant concluded the experience.

'We fled. We plunged over the crags above Gathering Hill - and every time I go back and look at those crags, I wonder why we didn't

break our necks. We fled in mindless terror down that mountainside towards the Shelf Brook and Doctors Gate - and all the sheep and wildlife that could run or fly went careering down with us in utter panic. And then, about half way down, we seemed to run out into the sunlight - and it was all over! All the panic gone. The sheep stopped, put their heads down, and started to graze. Everything returned at once to normal. But back up there, on Higher Shelf Stones, wisps of mist were still coiling round....'[68]

The informant had his own views about what was the cause of this particular mountain panic and of attempts to 'explain'.

'Don't ask me to rationalise. Or rationalise it away - which is what it amounts to. I've come to the conclusion that sort of thing amounts to no more than a cop-out, a late twentieth century defensive mechanism - it's safe if it can be explained. As if 'explaining away' were like defusing a bomb. I do think that every now and then, some of us - maybe all of us - stumble into an encounter with elements deeper and older than we are, and they are not, by their nature, benevolent, though they may be. This certainly wasn't.[69]

Experienced mountaineer Bill Steele wrote to me detailing an experience which took place on Mt. Giluwe on Papua New Guinea. Several kilometres above the tree line Steele and his German climbing partner, casting about for a suitable campsite, stopped at the mouth of a cave for lunch. Over to Steele: 'As we finished we discussed whether to make a base camp there and push on to the peak with a light pack. At this time I suddenly felt an intense feeling of my impending death, there was a sense of being watched by something evil that seemed to be drawing near and about to pounce. Although there was nothing to be seen apart from the pleasant shelter and it was a bright dry day I knew I must get away immediately from that place. When I called to Dieter to grab our stuff and run he thought I must have somehow lost all reason as he felt nothing unusual at all. I then panicked and said he could do what he liked but I was off! I threw the pack over my shoulder and ran as fast as I could down the track and only slowed down when I reached the treeline several kilometres away.' Steele also commented that he felt safer the further away he got from the cave mouth, echoing other accounts where witnesses have felt the feeling increase or decrease as they moved across the landscape.[70]

There are many, many more similar accounts from across the world. All include isolated areas and mountain panics. Some, like those on Ben Macdhui and Bennachie, have become attached to and synonymous with entities said to cause the panic. Some appear to be in clusters, like those of Northern Skye, but remain as yet 'unnamed'. Others stand alone, as one-off, random experiences in space and time. All the witnesses were profoundly terrified by their encounters with this unknown terror. There is genuine mystery here. But once identified, even a possibly new genre of anomalous experience becomes just another 'interesting' story for the fortune equivalent of stamp collectors unless some attempt is made to untangle possible cause or to put the phenomena in context.

As several of the experiences have taken place in the same general area it is tempting to suggest that the origin for the experiences are intimately connected to, and possibly caused by, the area. Earth Mysterians, nature mystics and fringe scientists have long suggested there are 'energies' locked into the landscape. Energies which can be tapped into intentionally or accidentally and which are responsible for a wide variety of strange phenomena from fairies to ghosts to UFOs. It is also claimed that these energies can cause illness, stress, unease and a range of psychological and physiological symptoms. This idea is echoed in the Chinese concept of feng shui where landscapes or dwellings would be physically altered to aid the flow of an energy called *ch'i*, which in turn affected people's well-being. So could it be unspecified 'energies' of this nature which are causing mountain panics?

Archaeologist and dowser Tom Lethbridge thought so and referred to these incidents as 'ghouls'. As a teenager he and his mother had experienced 'a horrible feeling of gloom and depression' in some woods, which lead them to hurry away. Later a suicide was found almost at the spot. When married both Lethbridge and his wife experienced a similar ghoulish independently at Ladram Bay in Devon. This seems to be one of the spots where the experience is replicable as they felt it again, together. His wife walked into it again at the top of a cliff and 'Moreover she had an odd feeling, as if someone - or something - was urging her to jump over.' Shades of the fleeing panics detailed so far. Lethbridge attributed this phenomenon to a 'place-field' caused by underground water producing changes in the earth's magnetic field and thus affecting the

brain of anyone who happened to be in the right place at the right time. [71]

'Repeater' spots like the Cairngorms, North Skye, Ladram Bay and so on may, if investigated further, yield positive evidence of 'energies' which lead to panics and possibly suicides. The Christian church has certainly held this view and accident black spots and regular suicide locations have been exorcised to rid them of the perceived demonic influence. Many of these locations are said to create effects which temporarily unbalance the human mind. As an example of how they include the type of 'panic' I am discussing here, an earth mysteries journal printed the following letter from Michael Cook in which he describes a car journey home along familiar, well travelled roads.

'As I was driving around a not particularly sharp bend, and not too quickly, I suddenly felt seized by panic; I felt I was being dragged off the road and would not negotiate the bend. It took a considerable effort of willpower to keep to the road. In a short while the panic disappeared and my confidence returned.' [72] Cook had driven over that same stretch of road many times before and after his experience with nothing untoward happening. On the surface this seems to be exactly the same type of phenomena experienced by BGM witnesses and others who have encountered a random and meaningless 'panic'.

In his classic study of the fear which gripped West Virginia during 1966 John Keel describes his encounter with a panic zone. Whilst out driving alone after midnight in the 'TNT area' Keel had, as he puts it, '...one curious experience. As I passed a certain point on one of the isolated roads I was suddenly engulfed in fear. I stepped on the gas and after I went a few yards my fear vanished as quickly as it came.' He noted the exact spot and drove through it twice more, with exactly the same effect. Keel stopped his car and '...walked back to the 'zone of fear' slowly, alert for any rustle of bushes, measuring my own breathing and emotions. I was perfectly calm until I took one step too many and was back in the zone. I almost panicked and ran, but I forced myself to look around and proceed slowly.' Keel determined the 'zone' was about fifteen feet across, and walked back through it to reach his car. He concluded he was 'probably walking through a beam of ultrasonic waves.' Returning to the spot in the morning he found the 'zone' had gone, and there was nothing in the area to account for it. [74]

Researchers Albert Budden and Paul Devereux have both written extensively about 'energies' which can have the type of effect we are discussing here. Devereux suggests consciousness affecting energy can originate via natural radioactivity and electro-magnetic fields. His books list numerous examples of anomalous experiences he believes have occurred after an encounter with these energies [75]. Budden contends that modern electro-magnetic pollution as well as natural electro-magnetism can have a radical and often deleterious effect on people [76]. None of this is completely proven but between them Lethbridge, Devereux, Budden and others are building a persuasive case for the earth's natural energies playing a part as being at least the stimulus for 'paranormal' experiences.

Critics will have none of this. Even the kindest would say they are replacing old folk tales with a new-age techno folklore, claiming that allegations of these 'energies' are rooted in unverifiable narrative and on science which is at best tenuous, at worst specious. But there is no doubt that the forces of natural radiation, electro-magnetism exist and reasonable to speculate they can have an effect on 'consciousness. With or without the acceptance of 'fringe' energies there are other ways of looking at the causation and interpretation of 'panics'.

Being among mountains and other wild places is frequently an awe inspiring experience where the difference between the natural and supernatural is often only a matter of perception. Perhaps senses stretched by exertion, heightened by beauty and isolation create psychological phenomena which causes panic of the type outlined in this article. Or perhaps the psychologists are wrong and there is another reason. In his book 'Gulfs of Blue Air' Jim Crumley lists ten 'More Reasons For Hills'. Number six is because, 'They accommodate the gods of the ancients'. A clue? [77]

In the western world at the end of the 20th century it is our predilection as a society to interpret any unknown experience as psychological or paranormal in nature, as if that designation explains it. Frequently we use one unknown to 'explain' another and explanations change with the times. The nature based cosmologies of our ancestors in these Isles would have no problem with the experiences I have recounted here. They believed every facet of the landscape had a

presence, and was a personification of a god or spirit, the *genius loci*. Anomalous or visionary experiences would have been interpreted as belonging to that particular rock, valley, cliff etc and symbolised in a form relevant to local mythology or folklore. Whether the experience was repeated or not the idea of the *genius loci* inhabiting that particular spot would become embedded in and handed down through the local tradition. My dictionary defines *genius loci* as the *spirit dwelling in a particular spot* or the *characteristic atmosphere of a place*. Does that sound familiar? So in a way the BGM and giant of Bennachie and so could be described as *genius loci*, still being experienced, irrespective of any pre-existing traditions concerning them.

So perhaps these mountain panics are the direct experience of a location's *genius loci*. But that's as unprovable a concept as the 'earth energies' theory or as pointless as a reductionist psychological viewpoint. Visionary experiences, mountain panics, earth 'energies' can also be seen as metaphors for spontaneous psychic or psychological experiences, which in turn are metaphors themselves for any experience in which human consciousness comes up against the forces of nature. Not nature as described by the aesthetics of landscape appreciation via art or literature. Or nature as in the form of a scientific understanding via the various relevant ology's. All those are just temporary ways of *describing*. I mean what Cairngorm poet Nan Shepherd refers to as the 'experience of nature in the raw, a primitive thing, and utterly, utterly baffling'. [77]

To even begin to understand that we must go back to the description of experiences given by witnesses to all these phenomena and the core of that description seems to be one of 'panic'.

The word 'panic' which the witnesses to these strange experiences often use derives, of course, from the Greek god Pan. According to one book on mythology, 'The feeling of solitude and lonesomeness which weighs upon travellers in wild mountain places...was ascribed to the presence of Pan.....And thus anxiety and alarm, arising from no visible or intelligible cause, came to be called 'panic fear', that is, such fear as is produced by the agitating presence of Pan.' [78] A typical description, which pretty much describes all the BGM accounts and other mountain panics listed here. Another writer has it that, 'Pan is unlimited in movement or scope of action - in the original Greek he is literally

'everywhere'.....The apparent form, again, is symbolic, rather than representational of any physical entity. The elemental archetype is more often sensed than seen.' [79] All descriptions of encounters with Pan speak of the same criteria and phenomena; lonely, often mountainous or wilderness areas, the core phenomenon being randomly triggered and frequently experienced or later described in terms of a physical entity, which isn't really 'there'.

So have all the witnesses to 'panics' met Pan, and isn't that just *another* bonkers explanation anyway? The clue to it is to get away from notions of entities, nature spirits, energies and so on as being in any sense objectively real, and to look at 'panics' and the Pan experience as yet another metaphor for the interpretation of 'raw nature' when it overrides our normal waking consciousness.

Perhaps the clearest synthesis of the panic experience and one with the most relevance here is that given by Jungian analyst James Hillman who wrote:

'Panic, especially at night when the citadel darkens and the heroic ego sleeps, is a direct participation mystique in nature, a fundamental, even ontological experience of the world as alive and in dread. Objects become subjects; they move with life while one is oneself paralysed with fear. When existence is experienced through instinctual levels of fear, aggression, hunger or sexuality, images take on a compelling life of their own. The imaginal is never more vivid than when we are connected with it instinctually. The world alive is of course animism; that this living world is divine and imagined by different gods with attributes and characteristics is polytheistic pantheism. That fear, dread, horror are natural is wisdom. In Whitehead's term nature alive means Pan, and panic flings open a door into this reality.' [80]

An apt description of exactly what happens. In wild or mountainous country the solitude, exertion and oft overpowering awe of the surroundings together with realisation (consciously or otherwise) of being a fragile entity in an awesome and ultimately unknowable landscape could be said to overpower the 'heroic', or rational, ego. The 'objects', ie the environment and its contents become subjects - mist becomes BGM, areas of landscape become threatening, noises assume and infer preternatural origin, and then existence in all its forms is encountered

directly. Human consciousness is not prepared for this and panic results, the witness fleeing until the spell is broken, often by contact with other human beings or a familiar sound or location.

What's triggers this? Well as we've seen it could be any or all of the 'energy' theories put forward for Devereux et al. Or just the age-old call of the wild. Recall how Tewnion's shooting of the BGM was, according to him, just a panic response to mist, or how Wendy Wood believed her terror could have started with a deer bark? Or how the Bleaklow informant could only see wisps of mist when the panic had subsided, the 'giant' long since receded into the imaginal realm. Whilst they must remain a possibility for the trigger we need not even invoke mysterious energies as the cause of these panics as the following episode, from the Cairngorms near Ben Macdhu, illustrates:

'I was coming home round about 1.00am along the Revoan road when my nerve suddenly gave way. It was a fine winter's night, fairly clear, and I was belting along it when it suddenly hit me. Exactly what triggered it off I don't know - maybe the call of a vixen or a wild cat, the hoot of an owl or the bark of a roe-buck. Anyhow, I trembled. I ran whiles and walked fast, looking over my shoulder till I got home in the small hours..soaked with perspiration.....A doctor told me it could happen to any fit man and he could not account for it.'[81]

That experience occurred to a naturalist and forester with long experience in remote areas of the Cairngorms. Like many of the other witnesses he was a hardened hill man, knowledgeable about yet sceptical of local ghost lore and the like. In other areas of fortaean study, say ufology or ghost-hunting, these witnesses would have their experience as observers' and scepticism used to support the objective reality of their experience. But that's the myth of the credible witness. We're all fallible and susceptible and like the doctor said, 'it could happen to any fit man.' And apparently does.

Fans of the more occult explanations for mountain panics and their ilk may like to consider Marshall's remedy for this form of psychic experience. Upon returning home he, '...stripped to the buff, had a good rub down, swallowed a stiff dram and lashings of tea, and slept like a log till 7.am.' Who needs exorcists, psychologists or shamen!

Irrespective of whether these experiences are caused by the mind suddenly glimpsing the immensity of nature in the raw, or whether they are caused by as yet unknown forces *in* nature, they amount to the same thing - the direct experience of the overpowering force of nature and existence, to be fled from, to be personified as the BGM, a giant, the devil, *genius loci* or whatever.

As a final example of the random nature of these panics and of how they can affect others consider author John Buchan's (writing as Lord Tweedsmuir) unscheduled meeting with Pan.

'We do not hear so much to-day of the goat-foot god.....But the experience which was the basis of the myth does not go unrecorded. In wild places or in wild weather, men are still awed by a sense of the immensity and pitilessness of Nature. There is a *Natura maligna* as well as the Wordsworthian *Natura benigna*.....Sometimes, too, there come moments when one feels a kind of personal malevolence, the sense of a hostile will which almost takes bodily form, and which sets the nerves fluttering in despite of the reason. In such moments one sees- or at any rate feels- what the ancients meant by Pan.'[82]

Buchan goes on to relate an experience from 1911 in the Bavarian Highlands. Returning from the summit of the Alpspitze he noticed his guide had:

'.....fallen silent and, glancing at him, was amazed to see that his face was dead white, that sweat stood in beads on his forehead, and that his eyes were staring ahead as if he were in an agony of fear - as if terror were all around him so that he dared not look one way rather than another. Suddenly he began to run, and I ran too, some power not myself constraining me. Terror had seized me also, but I did not know what I dreaded. It was like the epidemic of giggling which overcomes children who have no wish to laugh. We ran like demented bacchanals, tearing down the glades, leaping rocks, bursting through thickets, colliding with trees, sometimes colliding with each other, and all the time we never uttered a sound. At last we fetched up beside the much-frequented high-way, where we lay for a time utterly exhausted. For the rest of the road home we did not speak; we did not even dare look at each other.'[83]

Buchan concluded,

'What was the cause? I suppose it was panic. Sebastian had seen the goat-foot god or something of the kind...and he had made me feel his terror.'[84] Buchan's guide had experienced 'Pan' and therefore panic, which had been transmitted to him as a form of contagion. This experience is very like Craig's experience on Bennachie, even down to the fact of the percipients not discussing the event afterwards.

Buchan in passing makes a very important point, that 'Pan' can be experienced as a terror or as it's opposite, a benign force. And again a trawl through the mountaineering literature reveals a plethora of experiences where people have experienced Wordsworthian raptures as an exact opposite to the malevolence personified by the BGM and the other nameless terrors I have described.

We've come a long way. From the possibility that odd experiences on a Scottish mountain may have been caused by an indigenous relict hominid, to a plethora of core experiences which I have termed 'mountain panics'. I make no claims for absolute truth here and indeed I am mindful that categorising these experiences, suggesting that one unknowable may have the same cause as another, similar one, is fraught with problems.

All I can say for sure about this research is that the *core experience* appears very similar in all cases, and that there is no one single occurrence which triggers it. I am also wary about needlessly creating another forteen pigeon-hole, that of mountain panic, for unexplained phenomena. But based on the evidence I have reviewed both new and old, I think this is a very real psychological or psychic phenomenon and one which may lie at the core of many so called 'paranormal' experiences. Its triggers may be many but they all stem from the human instrument's perception of and relationship with the reality we live in. As one commentator wrote to Affleck Gray '...the most mysterious thing to be found among mountains was the human brain'. [85]

In the end we can but speculate. It's entertaining and informative. But only the witnesses who have experienced these panics, witnessed the *Fear Liath Mor* and its brethren know for sure what it's like and what the experience means for them. There is a vast gulf between those who *know* and those of us who speculate. Huge Corrie's letter to Affleck Gray

summed up both the experience and the difference well:

'Sometimes in dark days, in wild places, Skye in dense mist and rain, in desert, mountains and jungle, I have thought that I got a hint or two. From our fancied and narrow security, I know, having looked out upon the wilderness in turmoil where there could be no help and no witness of our undoing, where the gleams were fleeting, as though the daylight itself were riven and collapsing, that I saw the filmy shapes of those things which darken and affright the minds of primitives. While the sky is changeful and menacing, and there are storms at sea, when our fellows are absent, when shades take their hour of ease and voices whisper in wood and stone, and mischance and death are veiled, but here we shall have gods and ghosts. The sharp sighted collectors of old-train lumber, and similar curios may still keep busy, and tie-up their dry bundles of mythology and superstitions; but I myself - and any Scottish hillman could make plenty more.'[86]

65) R. Thurston Hopkins, *Adventures With Phantoms*, Quality Press, London, 1946, p. 68.

66) *Pembrokeshire Folk Tales*, p.111.

67) Interview, 1994. Witness does not want his name used. He is known to my colleague David Clarke and I.

68) Interview, 1994.

69) Interview, 1994.

70) Letter from Bill Steele, 17 March, 1997

71) Colin Wilson, 'A Seeker After Truth', *The Unexplained*, p. 566-569.

72) Michael Cook, 'Road Story' *Northern Earth* no.

74 (Summer 1998) p. 24.

73) John Keel, *Visitors From Space*, Panther, St Albans, 1976, p. 79-80.

74) Paul Devereux, *Places of Power*, Blandford, London, 1990. All Devereux's books are worth reading for details of 'earth energies'.

75) Albert Budden, *Electric UFOs*, Blandford, London, 1998.

76) Jim Crumley, *Gulfs of Blue Air*, Mainstream, Edinburgh, 1997, p. 191.

77) Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*, Aberdeen University Press, 1981.

78) Alexander S. Murray, *Who's Who In Mythology*, Studio Editions, London, 1992, p. 136-137.

79) Tom Graves, *Needles Of Stone Revisited*, Gothic Image, Glastonbury, 1986, p. 162.

80) James Hillman, *Pan and the Nightmare*, Dallas, 1972, p. 54.

81) Gray, *op. cit.* p. 17.

82) Rt. Hon. Lord Tweedsmuir, 'Pan', *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, vol. 22 (April 1939), no. 127. p. 41-43.

83) Tweedsmuir, *op. cit.* p.135-136.

84) Tweedsmuir, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

85) Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 102

86) Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

UFOs:
SUB ROSA*
 DOWN UNDER
 THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY & GOVERNMENT
 ROLE IN THE UFO CONTROVERSY (part 7)

BY BILL CHALKER
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The author is a leading Australian UFO researcher and a contributing editor to the International UFO Reporter. An industrial chemist with an honours science degree from the University of New England he has worked in quality assurance and laboratory management. His book, *The OZ Files - the Australian UFO Story*, was published in 1996. He coordinates the NSW based UFO Investigation Centre (UFOIC).

Bill has allowed his work to be published in Project Red Book on numerous occasions, and it is now my pleasure to begin a major series on Bill's research into the secret investigations of the Australian government and military of UFOs.

Sub Rosa: refers to "under the rose", meaning "in secret".

ASIO INFILTRATION

The end of the decade also saw the intrusion of the espionage milieu -- UFO style. Stan Seers was President of the Queensland Flying Saucer Research Bureau. In 1959, after a clandestine car park rendezvous, to initiate a covert relationship, the agent, D____ D____, got down to the nitty gritty. He wanted Seers to "play ball" with ASIO, on a strictly confidential basis.

The agent stated that in the event of any really "hot" UFO information - landings, contacts, etc., he would if necessary put Seers in direct telephone communication with Prime Minister Bob Menzies.

Stan Seers reflected, "I recall thinking how hilariously stupid the whole affair sounded, and remember having some trouble for a minute or so keeping a straight face?"

When Seers subsequently told D____ that he had discussed the covert "offer" with the rest of the QFSRB committee, the ASIO man was furious. The upshot of this was that it appeared the agent virtually successfully destabilised the group. Within a year Seers resigned, only to be coached back two years later. But still the group "found it impossible to completely shake off the attentions of the man from ASIO." He remained in close contact with the group for eleven years, until his death in 1970.

The abiding theme was that the ASIO man was only interested in data acquired by covert

means. The intelligence ethic demands that quality intelligence is only acquired by clandestine means. Unfortunately this is not always the case and often such information serves the purpose of placing upon previously innocuous events a sinister aura and consequently sometimes leading to an incorrect interpretation by the intelligence analyst. The whole thing snowballs until the clandestine version bares little resemblance to the reality of the original event.

As Seers cogently states in his book:

"The one surprising feature of all this rank stupidity on the part of the powers that be is the proven fact that all research groups have always been more than happy to pass on to them any material, or information, that came their way. On one occasion ASIO requested from the Queensland group the loan of all 37 pages of their copy of the Boianai sighting reports for microfilming. When the loaned material was returned, a free microfilmed copy (still in my possession) came with it"

A TURNING POINT

The civilian groups stood at the end of the fifties in a position of strength, unified, strengthened, and galvanised into action, by the quality of the Gill reports. The extraordinary reports of UFO "visitants" over Boianai, Papua New Guinea, during 1959, were remarkable testimony from "credible observers of relatively incredible things" (as

the director of USAF intelligence, Major General John Samford referred to the witnesses of the minority of "unknown" and "unidentified" reports, back in 1952). The Anglican church missionary, Reverend William Gill, provided civilian groups with remarkable testimony of unknown "interlopers". They were in stark contrast to the hoary silliness that punctuated the flirtation of enthusiasts with the contactee absurdities during much of the fifties. Buoyed by substantial data, the civilian groups were ready to face what would prove to be the turbulent sixties.

In contrast, from 1955 and particularly in the wake of the striking Gill testimony, the RAAF began a retreat from their original open minded position. By then the growing number of sightings had turned into "the UFO problem" - a problem with uncertain and controversial public relation, military and political dimensions. To them the situation was embodied in the determination that they were dealing with "the UFO problem" - a problem with uncertain and controversial public relations and political dimensions. Controversy about possible unknown interlopers in our airspace could not be tolerated, and officialdom was moving towards effectively managing "the problem". The scientific ethic never really got off the ground. It had been effectively scuttled and was in retreat. The scientific approach had been pushed aside with the rejection of nuclear physicist Harry Turner's secret study of the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence (DAFI) UFO files. The military and political ethic had begun its long march of dominating the official approach to the UFO controversy. The decades to follow would prove to be controversial and exciting as the Australian UFO controversy continued its evolution.

The 1960s and the 1970s were periods steeped in UFO accounts of high strangeness that emerged in a climate of gradually increasing maturity in the manner in which the phenomenon was investigated. Considerable intrigue and energetic debate marked the search for answers from both the perspective of the civilian researcher and that of the clandestine world of official investigations. Occasionally such activities came together in curious ways but generally official investigations remained the stuff of secrecy, at least to the general public. Civilian researchers themselves were caught up in fundamental and evolutionary steps towards understanding the nature and extent of the UFO phenomenon.

THE CRESSY AFFAIR

The Cressy area of Tasmania became the centre of a spectacular wave of sightings in October and November, 1960. An entirely credible witness was at the centre of the milieu. Once again, an Anglican priest reported that he had seen a UFO. The Reverend Lionel Browning and his wife witnessed a fantastic sight from the dining room of the Cressy Anglican rectory on 4th October, 1960. A detailed account appeared in the Launceston Mercury of October 10th headlined '*FLYING SAUCER' SEEN AT CRESSY*'. Mysterious ships in the sky. A succession of media stories followed elevating the sighting in to national prominence.

Again, because of the undeniable credibility of the witness, the RAAF were in a difficult position in their efforts to contain the rapidly escalating public clamour.

Wing Commander Waller interviewed Rev. Browning and his wife on November 11th, at their Cressy home. Waller concluded that the couple were "stable, responsible and unexcitable individuals who would not perpetrate a hoax", and were "genuinely and firmly convinced that they saw actual objects."

He confirmed this assessment in a letter to Dr. James McDonald, who undertook a retrospective investigation into the sighting during his 1967 Australian visit.

The RAAF's attempts to explain the Cressy sighting away were rather hollow, particularly given an intriguing sighting report I found buried in the DAFI UFO files. On November 15, 1960, some 50 kilometres north of Cressy, a United States Air Force JB57 aircraft, operating out of East Sale RAAF base, encountered a UFO.

The Cressy affair even had a sequel in Australia's federal parliament. Rev. Browning's federal member, Mr. Duthie, asked the following question on October 20th, 1960:

Mr. Duthie: Has the Minister for Air read the reports of unidentified flying objects sighted in Australia in the last two years, especially the detailed description of such an object at Cressy in my electorate by the Reverend Lionel Browning and his wife two weeks ago, and twice last weekend? Incidentally, the reverend gentleman was my Liberal opponent at the 1951 and 1954 elections. Does the Minister accept responsibility for investigating these

sightings? Has the Minister any information about them that may be of interest to the people of Australia?

The Minister for Air, Mr. Osborne, responded with an answer that would form the basis of RAAF policy for more than a decade to come. Mr. Osborne:

"I have read the press reports of these sightings in Tasmania, and in accordance with the usual practice, all the information that is available concerning them has been furnished to my department and is now being examined. The Department of Air does obtain information about all well reported cases of unidentified flying objects. The department not only receives information about them but also exchanges it with the Royal Air Force and the United States Air Force. There is a regular exchange of information on these matters. I can tell the honourable member for Wilmont that although reports of this sort have been investigated very carefully for years, nearly all of them are explainable on a perfectly normal basis. Sometimes they are found to be weather balloons, high-flying aircraft or even stars.

"On one occasion, it was established that a reported spaceship was the moon. Of all these reports, only 3 per cent. or 4 per cent. cannot be explained on the basis of some natural phenomenon, and nothing that has arisen from that 3 per cent. or 4 per cent. of unexplained cases gives any firm support for the belief that interlopers from other places in this world, or outside it, have been visiting us."

The Gill "entity" reports of 1959 and the Browning "mothership" report at Cressy in 1960, provided substantial dilemmas for official UFO investigations. In both cases Anglican ministers were the primary witnesses and press coverage was extensive and positive. A confidential briefing paper prepared by DAFI to the RAAF Staff Officer to the Minister of Air concluded after cursory investigations:

A preliminary analysis of the available information indicates that (the Cressy) sighting was some form of natural phenomena associated with the unsettled weather condition. You will recall that the sighting by Reverend William Gill in the Boianai area of New Guinea, which also received wide publicity, was very similar and occurred under almost identical weather conditions. On that occasion, after investigation, we concluded that the sightings were either known planets seen through fast moving cloud, or natural phenomena. The notable difference between

the reports is that objects observed by the Reverend Browning were dull grey in colour, while those seen by the Reverend Gill were brightly lit and, in one case, allegedly contained humanoid beings.

The Brownings in the case of Cressy impressed the investigating RAAF officer as "mentally alert individuals who had no cause or desire to see objects in the sky other than objects of definite form and substance." In the case of the Gill reports the investigating officers' opinions on the main witness's character were also most favourable. Despite the impact of the Boianai and Cressy reports and the apparent incongruity of the official "explanations", the prevailing controversy failed to shift the official stance on UFOs that "nothing that has arisen from the 3 or 4 per cent of unexplained cases gives any firm support for the belief that interlopers from other places in this world or outside it have been visiting us." A close analysis of both cases (Boianai and Cressy) argues powerfully that the RAAF "explanations" are unsatisfactory.

A RADAR VISUAL INCIDENT NEAR DARWIN

A RAAF radar unit at Lee Point, near Darwin, in the Northern Territory, allegedly monitored a UFO sighting during 1962. At about 8 p.m. one evening, service men observed what appeared, at first, to be "a strange kind of star." It kept changing colour, dropping in altitude and then rising again. The Met office indicated that no planes or balloons were aloft at the time. They estimated the altitude of the object was about 5 to 6,000 feet. Service men watched the UFO's movement on their own radar. Their sergeant estimated that the UFO was the size of a house. Soon after it started to move slowly in a clockwise arc finally disappearing near dawn!

THE 1965 BALLARAT UFO CONVENTION

A major turning point in civilian UFO research in Australia occurred on February 27th, 1965, at Ballarat, Victoria. What was billed as Australia's first convention of UFO groups provided a focus for elevating the respectability of the UFO subject. Unfortunately, in hindsight it also started a process that, while initially encouraging, would eventually divide some UFO groups and

lay the seeds of group political warfare which would resound for years to come.

The occasion was one of great euphoria for those researchers, investigators and enthusiasts who attended. The conference had been arranged by W. Howard Sloane, of the Ballarat Astronomical Society, with the aim of removing "the stigma of ridicule from research into UFOs." Not only did representatives of most existing Australian groups attend, but there were also several witnesses to some of Australia's most famous cases, including the Rev. William Gill and Charles Brew, who spoke about their experiences. Former Air Marshall Sir George Jones attended and was outspoken in his support for serious UFO research. The RAAF was represented by Mr. B. G. Roberts, Senior Research Scientist, of the Operational Research Office, Department of Air, Canberra. The presence of a scientific consultant of the RAAF, along with 2 RAAF officers, manning a hardware display, was an unprecedented step for the Australian government.

The civilian researcher presentations indicated the thrust of group investigations at the time. Leslie Locke, President of the Perth UFO Research Group, spoke on the theme of "Preparing for contact". Pioneer researcher, Fred Stone, from South Australia, reviewed activity in New Zealand and emphasised the desirability of unity amongst UFO groups. Colin Norris, of the South Australian group, Australian Flying Saucer Research Society, gave a slide presentation on the "History of UFOs", and also represented the Queensland Flying Saucer Research Bureau, who were unable to send a delegate. A tape of QFSRB member Carl Lehmann on "Origin of UFO" reviewed all the possible planetary origins of "spacecraft coming to earth." Peter Norris, President of the Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society, gave a detailed presentation on "Occupants of UFOs." Andrew Tomas, another pioneer researcher, represented the Sydney based UFO Investigation Centre (UFOIC), and delivered a lecture on "Purpose of coming to Earth". His lecture canvassed such ideas as "global exploration" and "the world crisis theories", highlighting that "a contact between planetary civilisations could become the greatest challenge of all times." Paul Norman, of VFSRS, lectured on "Electric Effects of UFOs."

The Department of Air (Air Force) scientific representative, B. G. Roberts gave a presentation, which addressed the term UFO and some objections to it, official assessments

of aerial sightings, and the identification of sightings. Roberts argued the term "unidentified aerial sightings" (UAS) was a more appropriate one than UFO, the latter term having long since been regarded as just another term for "flying saucers". He indicated that "the assessment of reports of unidentified aerial sightings in Australia and the territories is the responsibility of the Department of Air at Canberra. There is no hidden implication in this allocation of responsibility. The Department is simply the most appropriate authority for the task, which is performed to determine whether or not a threat to the security of the nation is involved." Roberts highlighted that 9 out of 10 sightings are explainable.

In terms of "unidentified sightings" Roberts stated:

"The number of sightings which the Department is unable to identify from the information available has remained fairly consistent at around two a year. Indeed, given sufficient time and effort, the number of unidentified sightings probably could be reduced further. One has to assess, however, whether the required additional time and effort is warranted. The Department of Air believes that there is, and always will be, a small number of sightings (due to high altitude phenomena, which are strange to the untrained eye) for which the available information will never be sufficient to enable an identification to be made. In other words it is just not possible to achieve a 100% record of successful identification. The ideal can be approached but not achieved, simply because the inaccuracies inherent in this type of work militate against its achievement."

Roberts indicated:

"The number of unidentified sightings each year in Australia does not warrant such great effort or expense. Only where there is evidence that a threat to the security of the nation is involved (e.g. the possibility of foreign aircraft infringing our air space) would this attitude be reversed. The Department of Air believes that there always will be aerial sightings of high altitude phenomena which are strange to the untrained eye and that of these some will not be identified.

"Finally, I would like to make it clear that the Department of Air never has denied the possibility that some form of life may exist on other planets in the universe.... However, the Department has, so far, neither received nor discovered in Australia any evidence to support the belief that the earth is being observed, visited or threatened by machines from other planets. Furthermore, there are no

documents, files or dossiers held by the Department which prove the existence of 'flying saucers'."

The civilian UFO researcher audience, at the Ballarat convention, sceptical of the claimed lack of compelling UFO photos in the RAAF files, were interested in Mr. Roberts knowledge on "the holy grail of Australian ufology", namely the photographic evidence secured by Papua New Guinea DCA Deputy Director, Tom Drury, back in August, 1953. Peter Norris, President of VFSRS, asked Roberts if he was aware of the film. Roberts said he was not. Fred Stone indicated that 4 stills from the Drury film had been supplied to him by the RAAF in 1954. Roberts clearly was uninformed about this famous case and even remarked, "I feel a bit like Daniel in a lions' den!" Andrew Tomas indicated he had seen the film in the hands of Edgar Jarrold, the pioneer Australian researcher and director of the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau. There is evidence that Jarrold did eventually receive prints of individual frames, some 94 prints, but not the actual film. Tomas told the convention that the RAAF sent the film to Dayton, Ohio, and then researchers lost track of it.

Former RAAF Air Marshall Sir George Jones also challenged Mr. Roberts. While questioning the value of photographs as evidence of the reality of UFOs, he never-the-less insisted on keeping an open mind towards reports such as those of Charles Brew at Willow Grove, Victoria, and Rev. William Gill and others in Papua New Guinea. Sir George said to Mr. Roberts, "You leave me with an impression that everything can be explained away given sufficient time and effort. I don't know how they (RAAF) get on with those things (meaning reports like those of Charles Brew and Rev. Gill)."

What seemed to have been a very good idea emerged at the conference. It was suggested apparently by RAAF representatives that the RAAF would deal with civilian UFO organisations only if they were organised on a federal level. It was resolved at the convention to form such a national organisation – "a centralised body all the groups in Australia in order to deal with the government and public on top level." The name of this organisation was agreed as C.A.P.I.O. (Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigation Organisation). Office bearers were elected at the convention. Peter Norris, VFSRS president, was made CAPIO president. Leslie Locke (Western Australia) and Andrew Tomas (NSW) were elected vice presidents. Sylvia Sutton and

Judy Magee, both from VFSRS, took the positions of secretary and assistant secretary respectively. The CAPIO organisation had begun with great enthusiasm.

(Continued next issue)

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"UFO" Show on Banana TV at
www.bananatv.com.

IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!!

NEXT MEETING

(The first week in the month)

TUESDAY 5TH AUGUST

7:00pm – 10:00pm

**THE OLD QUEEN'S
HEAD**

Pond Street

Sheffield City Centre

BOLAM LAKE HAIR SAMPLES

By Jonathan Downes (Centre for Fortean Zoology)

Many of you will remember our expedition to Bolam Lake in January. During the expedition some hair samples were taken, and although as stated publicly at the time, I thought that it was highly unlikely that they had anything to do with the phenomenon that had been experienced by various members of the investigating team, in accordance with our strict scientific and professional principles, we had them analysed. We sent off three sets of hair samples.

Unfortunately, the ones which we sent to Lars Thomas in Copenhagen were a casualty of Her Majesty's Post Office and have disappeared. It would be entertaining to hypothesise that they had been intercepted by shadowy figures working for the Bilderberger group intent on suppressing our researches. However, in the light of the test results we have received we feel this to be highly unlikely.

The two samples which did reach their destination went to Darren Naish at the University of Portsmouth, and to Chris Moiser at Plymouth College of Further Education. They agree that the hair samples are from a small carnivore. Darren suggested dog, and Chris suggested cat. Both researchers agreed that it could not possibly be that of a Hominid or any other primate.

Interestingly, Chris found traces of a ground growing lichen in amongst the hair which suggests a that the creature had been lying on the ground for some time. It has been suggested that they were of a small dog or cat which had died possibly as a result of road kill, and had it been taken on to the fence where the hair samples were found, by a carnivorous bird who then proceeded to eat it.

I think that it says a lot about the calibre of keep both of our experts that they both tried to play a practical joke on us by claiming that it came from an animal allied to a gorilla (but both of them couldn't keep the deception up for more than a few seconds without laughing). The test results will be published in full in the next issue of *Animals & Men* (sometime this summer).

However, we shall have the electron microscope photographs in our possession within the next few weeks, and will

be happy to let any researcher have copies of them or, and of the reports in advance of our publishing them if they feel that they could extrapolate any data of any further interest from the photographs.

We have a small amount of the hair left at the CFZ if any other academic institution feels like looking at them. However, we are satisfied that our original interpretation of them - being nothing to do with the BHM Phenomena - was correct.

All the best,

Jon Downes (Director CFZ)

WEIRD WEEKEND

The fourth annual Weird Weekend is to be held from the 3rd to the 5th (Friday-Sunday) of October at the Cowick Barton Inn, Cowick Lane, Exeter, Devon. Come and take part in the largest Fortean convention in the Westcountry.

Speakers include: *Dr Karl Shuker, Colonel John Blashford-Snell, Reg Presley, Mark North, Chris Moiser Adam Davies, Tim Matthews Steve Jones, Jon Downes and Richard Freeman.*

Tickets are Friday - Sunday inclusive £15, or Friday- £10 / Saturday- £10 / Sunday- £10

FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFO CONTACT

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15 Holne Court
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tel 01392 424811

Or look at our website
www.stormpages.com/weirdweekend

Or e-mail jon@eclipse.co.uk

RECORD DAY FOR NESSIE SIGHTINGS

LAST Sunday proved a good day for monster spotting with no less than three sightings in eight hours as many as recorded in the whole of 2002.

Two of the sightings were from the cruise boat Royal Scot and the third was claimed by a fisherman at around 10pm. All were reported in the Fort Augustus area.

The skipper of the Royal Scot, who asked not to be named, spotted a fast-moving wake in the water at around 2pm, but thinks he was the only person aboard to see it at the time.

"The loch situation at that time was flat calm absolutely mirror glass," he recalled. "It was travelling at 30 to 35 miles an hour. It was probably chasing salmon. It is some sort of fish-eating machine."

The second sighting at 8pm lasted for 35 minutes and was witnessed by all 25 passengers and three crew aboard at the time.

"What we saw was the top of a hump four to five feet long and five or six inches out of the water. It was just drifting along with the water," the skipper revealed.

The sightings came a week after the boat's sonar detected an object 20 feet long and weighing almost two tons, 320 feet below the surface in the same area.

Sunday's third sighting was reported at Borlum Bay. The fisherman saw something resting on the surface for three or four minutes before it did a surface roll underwater and disappeared. It was described as almost black in colour and close to a seal in size.

Gary Campbell of the Loch Ness Monster Fan Club was happy to hear of so many sightings after a quiet year.

"Three sightings in a day, I would have to say, is a record," he commented.
(*Inverness Courier* - June 2003)

BIGFOOT SPOTTED IN CENTRAL CHINA June 30, 2003

An 'ape-like' beast nearly 1.65 metres tall has been sighted in the forests of central China, a media report on Monday said today.

The grayish 'mythical ape-like animal', suspected by locals to be a 'bigfoot', was reported to have shoulder-length black hair, it said.

Bigfoot is more commonly known as the Yeti and has remained an unsolved mystery of the Himalayas. Known as 'the rock living animal' (Yah means rock and the means animal in Sherpa), and popularly known as 'the abominable snowman' in the west, the sightings of Yeti have been reported since the late 1800s.

Half man, half monkey, it is said to live high up in the thick forests of Nepal and Tibet, where it is known locally by the name 'migou'.

Chinese wildlife officials have launched an investigation after apparent sightings of the mysterious animal on by six people, including a reporter from the local broadcasting station, in Shennongjia nature reserve in Hubei province on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported.

Shang Zhengmin, the reporter, and five others were on the way back to Songbai town from Muyu town when they sighted the creature.

When the vehicle they were in took a left turn along the mountain road, four people in the vehicle saw an ape-like animal moving fast on the road. But as the vehicle finished the turn, the animal had disappeared.

The passengers got out of the vehicle and found several 30 centimetre-long footprints and newly broken branches in the jungle near the road.

On the road where the animal was spotted, they claimed to have discovered a three-meter-long patch of foul smelling urine-like liquid.

Hundreds of local people have reported 'bigfoot' sightings over the past decades in the Shennongjia area.

China has organised several high-profile searches for the unidentified animal through the 1980s and 1990s, but no hard evidence has been found.